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AUTHOR Schmuck, Patricia A.
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ABSTRACT

The first section of this paper describes sex segregation in the field of education. The second section describes the Sex Equity in Educational Leadership Project, a model program for change. The project's five goals and the activities designed to achieve those goals are described. The five goals are building awareness and giving information about sex inequities in education, changing the content of administrative training programs, conducting research, impacting on Oregon's educational system to continue reform activities, and disseminating program findings. (Author/IRT)

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SEX DIFFERENTIATION IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES: A POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL APPRAISAL

By

Patricia A. Schmuck, Ph.D.

Director, Sex Equity in Educational Leadership Project

Assistant Professor of Educational Administration

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Center for Educational Policy and Management

University of Oregon

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In 1972, the United States Congress enacted far reaching legislation prohibiting discrimination by sex. Title IX reads that, "No person. . .shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. . ." (U.S. Congress, Public Law 92-318).

The implementing regulations under the Department of Health, Education and Welfare were passed in 1975. The purpose of Title IX is clearly and simply to prohibit sex discrimination against students and employees of educational programs and activities receiving federal funds (with certain exceptions). Male and female students are granted equal opportunity with regard to admissions (such as prohibiting quotas), access to curricular and extracurricular programs (such as prohibiting certain classes or sports only offered to one sex), treatment concerning benefits, conduct and dress (such as prohibiting differential dress standards or counseling materials which are biased by traditional sex roles), and access and benefits of employment (such as encouraging greater role latitude for males and females).

Since the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding Brown vs. the Board of Education, the relationships between equality in education and in the society have been subjects for public and educator concern. A series of Federal and State antidiscrimination laws have been enacted to better define equality and to ensure its provisions. Title IX is the most recent law. It is patterned after Title VI of the Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity in educational institutions. Title VI and Title IX address major and continuing sources of inequality in United States education and society. Although the major portion of Title IX is devoted toward equal educational opportunities for students, it also carries strict provisions regarding the personnel of public schools. Title IX states:

> "A recipient shall not discriminate on the basis of sex in the recruitment and hiring of employees. Where a recipient has been found to be presently discriminating on the basis of sex in the recruitment or hiring of employees, or has been found to have in the past so discriminated, the recipient shall recruit members of the sex so discriminated against so as to overcome the effects of such past or present discrimination."
> (U.S. Congress, Public Law 92-318)

It is primarily the employment provisions of Title IX that I will address in this paper. The field of education, like the labor force generally, is sharply segregated by sex. The first section of the paper describes sex segregation in the field of education and the second section of the paper describes the Sex Equity in Educational Leadership Project, a model program for change.

Sex Segregation in Education

Although women make up over half of the United States population and occupy 41% of the total labor force, most employed women are concentrated in the traditional female roles of clerical worker, household worker, elementary school teacher and waitress. Over half of the women employed are working in jobs which are predominately held by females. Furthermore, the social trends for "men's work" and "women's work" have increased within the last two decades (Blau, 1975).

The field of education, like the labor force, is sharply segregated by sex. Although women comprise 67% of the instructional staff in public schools, they only comprise 15% of the principals (and most of these are in grade 1 through 6 schools) and less than 1% of the school district superintendents. Moreover, these figures do not reveal the trend toward increasing inequity between men and women in education and in society. Despite the rising number of women in the labor force generally, the numbers and percentages of women in public school teaching and administration have been declining for several decades. The ratio of women to men in teaching has declined and the ratio of women to men in administration has declined at even a greater rate. In 1928, 55% of school principals were women, in 1948 the percentage dropped to 41%, in 1958, it was 38% and by 1968 it was only 22% (Neidig, 1977; Schmuck, 1975).

Stereotyping occupational roles by sex carries such force within the field of education that sex, rather than experience, age or level of training, is the best predictor of the occupational position an individual will hold. Based upon the statistics of the state of Oregon, one can predict with fair accuracy the educational position of an individual knowing nothing other than if the person is a male or female (Schmuck, 1976).

If one is a woman, the best prediction is that she is an elementary school teacher; such a prediction will be correct over half the time. If one is a man, the best prediction is that he is a high school teacher. Of course, the classroom teacher prediction is the best one for any educator, since 85% of Oregon's certified personnel are classroom teachers.

If one is not a classroom teacher, the predictions become more accurate. If one is a woman who is not in classroom teaching, she will most likely hold a position in special education, or second most often, be a librarian. These two positions account for 70% of the women who are not classroom teachers. If one is a man, he will most likely be an administrator, 60% of the non-teaching males in Oregon public schools are administrators. If he is not an administrator, he will most likely be in charge of adult professionals in a supervisory capacity.

The supervisory role of males is even further substantiated in the special education field. Whereas women hold 75% of special education positions, men hold 40% of the supervisory positions in special education. Even within the county units, women comprise 61% of the special education assignments, yet men hold 76% of the director positions.

An interesting analysis of social differentiation by sex was completed by Harriet Holter in Norway (Holter, 1970). Holter's thesis and supporting data correlate the prestige of a field and its sex composition. Those fields predominated by women are lower in prestige, pay and benefits than fields predominated by men. Furthermore, the increasing social status of a field is associated with more men entering and more women leaving. This phenomenon has been duplicated on the educational scene in the United States. Women have dominated the profession since they were first allowed to teach during the shortage of men after the Civil War. After World War II, however, men began entering the profession at a greater rate than the previous 100 years, with the advent of the GI Bill. Many veterans went to college who otherwise might not have pursued a career, and many of these veterans entered the field of education. Since World War II, the pay, benefits and prestige of the field of education has grown and the number and percent of women holding administrative positions has dropped by half.

In the U.S. as well as other countries, what men do tends to be more valued and more rewarded than what women do. Margaret Mead reported as early as 1949 that,

> "Men may cook, or weave or dress dolls or hunt humming-birds, but if such activities are appropriate occupations of men, then the whole society, men and women alike, votes them as important. When the same occupations are performed by women, they are regarded as less important."
> (Mead, 1949:168)

In education, one might argue that the most valued job is the teaching of children, yet the positions which are entrusted with the most status, prestige and pay are awarded to those who supervise adult professionals. Women, by and large, occupy the roles of teachers and men, by and large, occupy the roles of managers.

Title IX and subsequent action research projects funded by Congress are attempting to change deeply rooted social traditions, behaviors and institutional practices regarding sex role stereotypes and sex segregation. The causes for women's underrepresentation in school management is due to all these forces. Men are the managers of public schools in the United States, women face unique deterrents to careers in administration, and traditional practices govern the formal and informal processes of grooming, recruitment and selection that have favored white males.

Sex Equity in Educational Leadership Project

One federally funded project is the Sex Equity in Educational Leadership Project. Its purpose is to understand and change women's representation in educational administration. The SEEL Project includes several activities which address the problems of changing attitudes, behaviors and institutional

practices. A guiding assumption of all the project activities is that sex segregation in education is a result of forces operating at many levels and a change strategy must incorporate a variety of activities aimed at different audiences. There are five project goals carried on by a staff of eleven part-time people with a yearly budget of $200,000. It is beginning its second year. The goals and activities are discussed in the following section.

Goal I. Building awareness and giving information about sex inequities in education. A quarterly four-page newsletter is providing information and resources about men's and women's roles in education. Presentations are made to local, state and national audiences. A slide show, discussion guide and a series of training materials have been prepared so other individuals in the United States can plan presentations for their own audiences. It has been our experience that many men and women do not realize the extent to which they have consciously or unconsciously been guided by sex role stereotypes in their personal and professional decisions, and information about the facts is a powerful leverage for change.

Goal II. Changing the content of administrative training programs. Many states require a certificate or a degree in educational administration. Although the requirements for such certification vary from state to state, potential administrators usually return to a University setting to deal with issues of personnel management, school community relations, curriculum and finances. Because of the increase of federal regulations governing collective bargaining, equal educational opportunities and equal employment opportunities, many universities are offering additional courses. In Oregon, regulations are in process that will require all administrative trainees to exhibit competence in regard to the regulations of Title IX. The SEEL Project has developed materials to enhance this training; a university course in sex inequities in education has been developed and a textbook is in preparation.

Goal III. Conducting Research. Three research activities are in the process of completion. In one research activity we assessed the nature of public prejudice against females assuming administrative roles. This research was undertaken because many male administrators believed the public would not approve of a female manager. 824 adults were interviewed by an independent polling firm and over 90% of the respondents indicated approval for a woman in a leadership role in a elementary school, 84% approved of a woman as a high school principal, and 86% approved of a woman as a school district superintendent. A second research activity has attempted to identify the career paths of women in education and pointed out the similarities and dissimilarities to males. The third research activity is a case study of the screening and selection procedures for a top administrative position in one school district.

Goal IV. Impacting upon Oregon's educational system to continue reform activities. Sex equity is a political issue. The support and cooperation of various educational agencies is critical in a reform effort. The SEEL

Project is only beginning to enlist such agency cooperation. A major research undertaking in 1978-79 will include the documentation of every administrative opening and administrative change in Oregon. It is yet unclear whether state educational agencies will cooperate with this endeavor.

Goal V. Disseminating the findings. What is achieved, or not achieved, in Oregon is important to other state systems of education. As state systems are increasingly pressed to comply with the legislation of Title IX, the information learned in Oregon can be helpful to point out successful and unsuccessful strategies of change toward achieving sex equity in educational leadership.

The cost for maintaining a sex-segregated field is too high for schools, for students and for professionals. The current social division of men's work and women's work is dysfunctional. We can no longer afford stereotyped "masculine" or "feminine" behaviors to form our professionals. We need leaders who exhibit characteristics of being a nurturant, effective catalyst for others' ideas as well as exhibiting initiative and task-oriented energy. Concepts of "masculine" and "feminine" or men's work and women's work are outmoded and irrelevant criteria for choosing or recruiting school leaders. Individuals are needed who are able to rise above the restricting and confining social sex role stereotypes and behave in appropriate ways demanded by the task at hand. An increase of males in traditional female roles and an increase of women in traditional male roles offers a leverage point. Achieving sex equity offers wider freedom of career choice for male and female students and future educators and offers the opportunity to positively affect the functioning of the organization itself. The United State Congress has offered the spirit for the adventure.

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